CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

B-1

What is Dharma ?

By
Jayadayal Goyandka

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४
बुलन्दशहर (उ०प्र०)

Gita Press, P. O. Gita Press (Gorakhpur)

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

(Translated into English by the editorial staff of the Kalyana-Kalpataru)

1948	1971	First	Fourteen	Editions, 1,18,250
1975			Fifteenth	Edition, 10,000
1977			Sixteenth	Edition, 20,000
				Total 1,48,250

Price Ten Paise.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४
बुलन्दशहर (उ०प्र०)

What is Dharma ?

Question. Kindly explain what is Dharma.

Answer. It is difficult to find a person in the present age who can give a correct definition of Dharma.

Q. If so, kindly explain what you yourself understand by the term.

A. The subject of Dharma is very intricate and my knowledge of the scriptures is limited. As regards the Vedas, my study thereof is hardly

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

worth the name. Under such circumstances it will be sheer childishness on the part of an ordinary man like me to attempt to give a dissertation on Dharma. Moreover, what little I know of the subject I feel unable to explain, because I cannot reduce into practice all that I know.

Q. If so, kindly let us know your own conception of Dharma.

A. That which is worthy of being adopted and put into practice is Dharma.

Q. What do you think is worthy of being adopted and put into practice ?

A. The teaching of Mahāpuruṣas (great souls), which conduct to our material and spiritual welfare.

Q. Who is a Mahāpuruṣa ?

A. A person who knows the truth about God in its reality and entirety.

Q. What are his characteristics ?

A.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी॥
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः॥

(Gītā XII. 13-14)

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

"He who is free from malice towards all beings, who is friendly as well as compassionate, who has no feeling of meum and is free from egoism, to whom pleasure and pain are alike and who is forgiving by nature, who is ever content and mentally united to Me, who has subdued his body, mind and senses and has a firm resolve, who has surrendered his mind and intellect to Me,—the devotee of Mine in dear to Me."

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥

(Gītā XIV. 24-25).

"He who takes sorrow and joy alike, is established in the Self, regards as a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, receives both pleasant and unpleasant things in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike, he who is alike to honour and ignominy, is equal to friend and foe, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, he is said to have risen above the three Guṇas."

These are the characteristics of a Mahāpuruṣa (great soul).

Q. Do you know of any living Mahāpuruṣa among the Hindus, who satisfies these tests ?

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

A. Certainly, there are such Mahāpuruṣas, but I am not in a position to say anything about them.

Q. what is your definition on a Hindu ?

A. He who regards himself a Hindu is a Hindu.

Q. What does the word 'Hindu' really signify ?

A. It means one born in Hindustāna (India) and following the religious doctrines of an Āchārya (religious teacher) who appeared in India.

Q. Does this mean that communities having different religious persuasions and forms of belief, such as the Sanatanists, Aryasamajists, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Brahmos, and even uncivilized hill-tribes of India, all come under the fold of Hinduism ?

A. If they consider themselves to be Hindus, they are certainly Hindus.

Q. Does this mean that any and every faith started by a Hindu will invariably form part of the Hindu religion ?

A. Certainly.

Q. Among these different faiths which, according to you, is the best, the soundest and most conducive to human welfare ?

A. The faith that encourages in their purest form the forty virtues enumerated below, and

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

affords the greatest facility for their development among its votaries appears to me worthy of being regarded as the best and the soundest of all. The virtues are as follows:—

Harmlessness (Ahiṃsā), truthfulness, non-stealing, Brahmacharya (continence), non-accumulation of things, purity, contentment, austerity, scriptural study, devotion to God, spiritual wisdom, dispassion, self-discipline, control of the senses, endurance, piety, forgiveness, courage, compassion, sublimity, Ārjava, unselfishness, Amānitva, freedom from hypocrisy, absence of the backbiting spirit, straightforwardness, humility, fortitude, spirit of service, Satsanga, Japa, meditation, freedom from malice, fearelssness, even-mindedness, absence of egotism, friendliness, charity, devotion to duty and tranquillity.

Q. It will be very kind of you if you briefly explain these forty virtues.

A. It is a good suggestion you have made; please listen.

(1) **HARMLESSNESS** (Ahiṃsā) means refraining from injury to anyone through mind, speech or action.

(2) **TRUTH** means representing a thing precisely as one has perceived it through the mind or the senses, and in agreeable language.

(3) **NON-STEALING** means refraining from all forms of theft or illegal possession of others' property.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

(4) **BRAHMACHARYA** consists in abstaining from all the eight forms of sexual gratification.*

(5) **NON-ACCUMULATION OF THINGS** means refraining from accumulation from a sense of possession.

(6) **PURITY** connotes freedom from bodily and mental impurities.

(7) **CONTENTMENT** means complete absence of thirst of material objects.

(8) **AUSTERITY** means enduring hardships for discharging one's religious obligations (स्वधर्म).

(9) **SCRIPTURAL STUDY** includes study of sacred books, repetiton of the Divine Names and recounting the virtues of the Lord.

(10) **DEVOTION TO GOD**—This is expressed through faith in and attachment to God.

(11) **SPIRITUAL WISDOM** means discrimination between what is real and what is unreal.

---

* The eight forms of sexual gratification are:—

(1) Indulging in thoughts of such gratification (स्मरण), (2) uttering words denoting it (कीर्तन), (3) indulging in amorous sports (केलि), (4) looking at a member of the opposite sex with lustful eyes (प्रेक्षण), (5) indulging in amorous talks (गुह्यभाषण), (6) a mental resolve to indulge in sexual gratification (संकल्प), (7) to attempt such gratification (अध्यवसाय), and (8) consummation of the act (क्रियानिष्पत्ति).

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

(12) **DISPASSION** denotes complete absence of attachment to anything pertaining to this world or the next.

(13) **SELF-DISCIPLINE** is exercising control over the mind.

(14) **CONTROL OF THE SENSES**—There are five senses of perception and five organs of action. Their control means bringing them all under subjugation and using them according to one's discretion.

(15) **ENDURANCE** means the capacity to bear heat and cold, and to remain unaffected by pleasure and pain, etc., that is not to be influenced by diverse experiences.

(16) **PIETY** means absolute faith in the Vedas, the scriptures and the teaching of Mahatmas, one's preceptor and the Lord as though they were directly perceived truths.

(17) **FORGIVENESS** means entertaining no thought of inflicting punishment on one who has wronged you.

(18) **COURAGE** means absence of cowardice.

(19) **COMPASSION** means the melting of the heart at the sight of suffering of a creature.

(20) **SUBLIMITY** (तेज) is that power of superior souls under whose influence even those who

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

are attached to worldly enjoyments and are of a base nature are deterred from sinful acts and take to noble pursuits.

(21) **ĀRJAVA** consists in the straightness of body, the senses and the mind.

(22) **UNSELFISHNESS** means not seeking satisfaction of any selfish desire connected with this world or the next.

(23) **AMĀNITVA** means not seeking honour, respect or homage.

(24) **FREEDOM FROM HYPOCRISY**—Hypocrisy consists in putting up a false show of piety and this should be scrupulously avoided by all.

(25) **ABSENCE OF THE BACKBITING SPIRIT**—Backbiting or slandering proceeds generally from jealousy and this should be completely eschewed.

(26) **STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS**—It means not attempting to conceal anything from a selfish motive.

(27) **HUMILITY** consists in having a low estimate of oneself.

(28) **FORTITUDE** means not to be perturbed in the face of the greatest difficulty and danger.

(29) **SPIRIT OF SERVICE** (to be actively engaged in doing good to all creatures)—It means

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

constantly striving to the best of one's ability through mind, speech and body and in a disinterested spirit to contribute to the happiness of all creatures according to their respective needs.

(30) **SATSANGA** means association with saints and holy men.

(31) **JAPA** is muttering or mental repetition of a Name of God or of a Mantra (sacred formula).

(32) **MEDITATION** means concentration of the mind on a Form of God to which one is specially attached.

(33) **FREEDOM FROM MALICE** means entertaining no enemity even towards an enemy.

(34) **FEARLESSNESS** means complete absence of fear.

(35) **EVEN-MINDEDNESS** means looking on all as equal from the point of view of the soul even though differences may be observed in dealing with them according to the Varṇa (caste) and Āśrama (order) to which they belong, just as one uses the limbs of his own body differently.

(36) **ABSENCE OF EGOTISM** means absence of the feeling of 'I' in respect of the body, mind and intellect and of the sense of doership in respect of actions performed through them.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

(37) FRIENDLINESS consists in extending the feeling of love towards all creatures, whether high or low.

(38) CHARITY consists in gratuitously supplying that which is needed in a particular place at a particular time and by a particular person, gladly and respectfully, without expecting any return or reward.

(39) DEVOTION TO DUTY—This is too clear to require any explanation.

(40) TRANQUILLITY—This state is attained when the mind is completely free from desires and peaceful, contented and perspicacious.

Q. Are you a follower of the Varṇāśrama Dharma ?

A. Yes, I am, and I also consider it good to follow the injunction of the Varṇāśrama Dharma.

Q. Don't you recognize those who do not follow of Varṇāśrama Dharma as Hindus ?

A. What right have I not to recognize them when they regard themselves as Hindus ? The Śāstras, however, have condemned those who do not follow the Varṇāśrama Dharma. Hence it is obligatory to follow the Varṇāśrama Dharma.

Q. Do you hold Varṇa (caste) to be determined by birth or by one's calling.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

A. I believe caste to be determined by birth and calling both.

Q. Which do you hold to be the dominant factor ?

A. Each of them is predominant in its own place.

Q. How many Varṇas are there in all ?

A. The varṇas are four in number—the Brahman, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śûdra.

Q. What are the functions of a Brahman ?

A.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

(Gītā XVIII. 42)

"Control of mind, control of the senses, undergoing hardship for the sake of duty, purity (both internal and external), forgiveness, straightness of mind and body, belief in God, the scriptures and the other world, knowledge of the sacred lore and knowledge of God based on direct experience—these are the Brahman's duty born of his own nature."

Besides these, to perform or conduct sacrifices, to make gift as well as to accept them, and, lastly, to acquire knowledge as well as to impart it, these are also the legitimate duties of a Brahman. Of these, again, to perform sacrifices, to make gifts and to acquire knowledge, these

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

are the three general duties that he shares with the other three Varṇas; while the other three, viz, to conduct sacrifices and accept gift and to impart knowledge, these are the special duties he is required to perform for the sake of livelihood.

Q. What are the best means of subsistence recommended for a Brahman ?

A. The best course for a Brahman is to collect seeds of grain left scattered on the ground after the cultivator has gathered his harvest or in the market place after the heaps of grain have been removed therefrom, and to subsist on such grain. This form of subsistence is called by the names of Ṛta and Sat—true and virtuous. But this practice having fallen into disuse, it is almost impossible to maintain life in the present age through this method. Therefore, a Brahman should earn his livelihood through the ordinary means.

Q. Which is best among the ordinary means of subsistence ?

A. Anything obtained without seeking is by far the best; such a thing is called Amṛta, ambrosia. To impart knowledge on a fixed remuneration and to ask for and then to accept a fee or a free gift are condemned by the Śāstras. Among these, again, to accept a free gift after seeking it has been described as equal to poison.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

Q. What should a Brahman do if he can not maintain himself through this method ?

A. He may maintain himself by adopting the vocation of a Kṣatriya, if he cannot make both ends meet even through this method, he may take to the occupation of a Vaiśya. But he should not adopt the occupation of a Śûdra (menial service) even in an emergency.

Q. What are the function of a Kṣatriya ?

A.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥
(Gītā XVIII. 43)

"Prowess, majesty, firmness, bravery, ingenuity, not running away from battle, generosity, rulership —these are the Kṣatriya's duty, born of his own nature."

The *Manusmṛti* says:—

प्रजानां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च ।
विषयेष्वप्रसक्तिश्च क्षत्रियस्य समासतः ॥
(I. 89)

"Portection of the pepole, making gifts and performing sacrifices, cultivation of knowledge and non-attachment to worldly enjoyments, these are, in short, the functions of a Kṣatriya."

Among thes, protection of the people, joining

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

the army, administration of justice, collection of revenue and wielding weapons for another's protection are occupations for livelihood; whereas making gifts and performing sacrifices and cultivation of knowledge are his general duties.

Q. What should a Kṣatriya do if he fails to maintain himself through these occupations ?

A. He may maintain himself through the adoption of the vocation of a Vaiśya. If that also fails, he may maintain himself by adopting the calling of a Śûdra.

Q. What are the functions and duties of a Vaiśya ?

A.

पशूनां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च।
वणिक्पथं कुसीदं च वैश्यस्य कृषिमेव च॥

(*Manusmṛti* 1. 90)

"Cattle-breeding, practice of charity, performance of sacrifices cultivation of knowledge, business, banking and agriculture; these are the functions and occupations of a Vaiśya."

Cattle-breeding, agriculture and business of an irreproachable and sinless type are the natural functions of a Vaiśya and also constitute the means of the livelihood. Banking is also one such means, but to engage only in swelling one's capital through addition of interest has been condemned by the Śāstras. Practice of charity,

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

performance of sacrifice and cultivation of knowledge are the general duties of a Vaiśya.

Q. Please tell us what constitutes purity in business ?

A. Purity in business means honestly dealing in commodities of pure nature without resorting to fraud or deceit and without any desire to cheat another.*

Q. What should a Vaiśya do if he fails to maintain himself through these occupations ?

A. He may adopt the occupation of a Śûdra, but in no case should he deal in impure things and engage in speculation.

Q. Kindly explain what you mean by dealing in impure things.

A. Business in liquor, flesh, bones, hides, horns, lac, indigo and such other nasty things condemned by the Śāstras should be regarded as impure business.

---

* Purity in business means honestly dealing in commodities of a pure nature without resorting to unfair means such as taking more and giving less in weight, measurement or number etc., giving an inferior stuff in exchange for a superior one and taking a superior stuff in lieu of an inferior stuff, selling adulterated products as genuine ones, extorting more and giving less then what has been stipulated by way of commission, brokerage, discount etc., defrauding others of their legitimate due through practice of fraud, deceit and other underhand dealings or through sheer force.

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

Q. What are the functions and duties of a Śûdra ?

A. Bodily service and the practice of arts and crafts constitute the natural functions and means of subsistence of a Śûdra.

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४
बुलन्दशहर (उ०प्र०)

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitization by eGangotri/Sarayu Trust. Funding IKS-MoE-Grant-2

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४
बुलन्दशहर (उ०प्र०)

Printed and Published by Motilal Jalan
at the Gita Press, Gorakhpur
(India)

पं० प्रेम दत्त शास्त्री
जहांगीराबाद २०२३९४
बुलन्दशहर (उ०प्र०)

Kirtikant Sharma Collection, Najafgarh